

RECOGNIZING THE LEADERSHIP AND DEDICATION OF DR. RON & MARY THOMAS TO THE UNIVERSITY OF PUGET SOUND AND THE GREATER TACOMA COMMUNITY

### HON. DEREK KILMER

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 3, 2016*

Mr. KILMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Dr. Ron & Mary Thomas, who this spring will complete their thirteenth and final year at the University of Puget Sound in Tacoma, WA. Dr. Thomas has served as the University's thirteenth President since 2003 and has left a historic mark on this already prestigious institution of higher education.

The University of Puget Sound is a more diverse, inclusive, comprehensive, accessible, and transformational place because of their leadership. Thousands of students, faculty, staff, and community members have been positively impacted by their presence in this community.

Prior to arriving at Puget Sound, Dr. Thomas served as a faculty member at the University of Chicago, Harvard University, and Trinity College. His career in higher education is decorated with numerous recognitions for contributions in writing, student life, and institutional leadership. With the arrival of Ron and Mary Thomas to Tacoma in the summer of 2003, the University of Puget Sound began its historic growth and transformation.

Mr. Speaker, for the past thirteen years, Dr. Thomas has led and overseen a renewal of the already beautiful University of Puget Sound campus. To complement the already stunning views of Mt. Rainier and towering Douglas fir trees, Dr. Thomas and his staff directed over \$200 million in campus capital improvements. These projects include a new academic science complex, upgrades in residential facilities, and athletic and recreational centers to bolster student life. Thankfully, Dr. Thomas and his team ensured that these projects were encompassed into a thoughtful and comprehensive campus master plan.

In addition to physical improvements on campus, Dr. Thomas and his wife Mary will forever be remembered in Tacoma for their dedication to the community and for successfully following through on their vision to connect the Puget Sound campus to the community that surrounds it. Since their arrival, Ron and Mary have been generous with their time and resources in supporting the civic and cultural institutions of Tacoma.

Mr. Speaker, during his tenure at UPS, Dr. Thomas helped create the "Tacoma Public Schools Commitment," which created a clear pathway for local students to attend this private, liberal-arts education at an affordable price. Given the community's diversity and challenges in paying for higher education, this initiative will help grow future generations of engaged and educated citizens of Tacoma.

Mr. Speaker, I join the larger Tacoma communities in expressing my gratitude today in the United States Congress for Dr. Ron and Mary Thomas for their thirteen years of leadership and dedication. As the proud Representative for Tacoma, WA in the House of Representatives, I offer my best wishes on their future adventures together.

CONGRATULATING THE BAND CHEAP TRICK FOR THEIR INDUCTION INTO THE ROCK N' ROLL HALL OF FAME

### HON. CHERI BUSTOS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 3, 2016*

Mrs. BUSTOS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the band Cheap Trick on their induction into the Rock n' Roll Hall of Fame. Cheap Trick is rightfully being honored by this iconic institution for their outstanding contributions to the music industry.

Cheap Trick, from our Congressional District in Rockford, Illinois, has performed over 5,000 times in the last four decades, sold over 20 million records and has 40 gold and platinum recording awards. They have also been recognized by the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences for their incredible contributions to music and pop culture.

Cheap Trick has been a staple of rock and roll for the past four decades, and their music has provided inspiration for young musicians for years and for decades to come. Despite their demanding tour schedule, Cheap Trick has always remembered their roots in Rockford and has always found time to perform in their hometown.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank Cheap Trick for their contributions to the rock and roll community, and for always making Rockford proud. I congratulate them again on their well-earned induction into the Rock n' Roll Hall of Fame and wish them the best of luck in their future endeavors.

CONGRATULATING HORIZON COMMUNITY MIDDLE SCHOOL

### HON. MIKE COFFMAN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 3, 2016*

Mr. COFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Horizon Community Middle School for their participation at the White House Science Fair and for their recognition as a Samsung Solve for Tomorrow National Winner.

A classroom of 40 seventh and eighth graders designed and produced a fully functioning prosthetic limb for local disabled Marine Corps veteran, Kyle Kelly. The limb was designed to help Kyle live a more active lifestyle, even allowing him to hike, ski, and skateboard comfortably.

Three students from the Horizon group, Simon-Peter Frimpong, Grayson Fast, and Maya Maxfield-Villard presented this project to President Obama at the annual White House Science Fair on April 13th.

It's inspiring to see students taking an interest in solving real-world problems through STEM while also helping veterans in need. These student innovators serve as an example for students throughout Colorado and the United States.

I would like to extend my sincere congratulations to the students and teachers of Horizon Community Middle School for all of your hard work on this important cause.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

### HON. XAVIER BECERRA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 3, 2016*

Mr. BECERRA. Mr. Speaker, I was unable to cast my floor vote on roll call vote number 155.

Had I been present for the vote, I would have voted "no" on roll call vote number 155.

IN RECOGNITION OF POLISH DAY AT THE CONNECTICUT STATE CAPITOL

### HON. ELIZABETH H. ESTY

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 3, 2016*

Ms. ESTY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize today's Polish Day celebration at the Connecticut State Capitol, and to congratulate the Polish people in celebrating the 225th anniversary of Europe's oldest written constitution.

Poland adopted the first written constitution in Europe on May 3, 1791. With the leadership of King Stanislaw August, Poland's constitution established many of the same principles of freedom and democracy ratified in the United States, like freedom of religion, the separation of powers, and political equality.

I am proud to represent New Britain, Connecticut, which has more residents of Polish descent than any other community in our great state. Polish-Americans have made invaluable contributions to the social, cultural, and economic life and history of communities in central and northwest Connecticut, and throughout our great state.

As a member of the Congressional Caucus on Poland, I am committed to strengthening the bilateral relationship between Poland and the United States. Those bonds of friendship date back centuries, and have only grown stronger through solidarity in the Cold War and continued collaboration to expand economic opportunity and promote security in the region and around the world.

So Mr. Speaker, on this Polish Constitution Day, it is my privilege to join neighbors across Connecticut and the entire United States in celebrating the 225th anniversary of Poland's first constitution. I know that this House joins me in honoring the many contributions of the people of Poland and those of Polish descent in developing democracy and furthering the cause of freedom throughout the world.

H.R. 5130, THE "STOP INFANT MORTALITY AND RECIDIVISM REDUCTION ACT OF 2016" ("SIMARRA ACT")

### HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 3, 2016*

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, last Friday I introduced the "Stop Infant Mortality and Recidivism Reduction Act of 2016," or the "SIMARRA Act," which will help the Federal Bureau of Prisons to improve the effectiveness

and efficiency of the Federal prison system for pregnant offenders, by establishing a pilot program of critical-stage, developmental nurseries in Federal prisons for children born to inmates.

It is time that our nation recognizes a long-persistent need to break the cycle of generational, institutional incarceration amongst mothers convicted of non-violent crimes and the children they birth behind prison bars.

H.R. 5130, the “SIMARRA Act of 2016,” gives those infants born to incarcerated mothers a chance to succeed in life.

“SIMARRA” is not merely yet another second chance program, demanding leniency from the criminal justice system.

Instead, H.R. 5130 asks our national criminal justice system what it can do for those young Americans born and relegated to a life of nearly impossible odds of survival.

“SIMARRA” provides that first chance—a first chance for American infants—that many of their mothers, born themselves to mothers behind bars, never received.

We have a unique opportunity to nurture infants with the “SIMARRA Act of 2016,” providing them a true head start.

A 2015 article in the *National*, estimated that at least 10,000 babies are born to American prisoners annually.

This issue is affecting more children and women than we realize.

The *New York Times* reported that approximately 25 percent of incarcerated women are pregnant, carrying children, on admission to prison, or gave birth during the previous year, still requiring special medical and nutritional resources for the health of their infants, as well as themselves.

Current Federal Bureau of Prison policy dictates that, in most cases, incarcerated mothers relinquish their children immediately after giving birth, handing them over to friends or family members, and most often to the foster care system.

Eleven percent of those children separated from incarcerated mothers and placed into foster care experienced at least two changes in caregivers during the period of the mother's incarceration; and sometimes these mothers, even when they have short prison sentences, never see their child again—forever lost to the foster-care system.

This practice is devastating the wellness and safety of American infants, denying them

the ability to lactate, bond and thrive with their mother's host body, as healthy infants require during the critical stage of development.

Children born to mothers in prison and removed to social services programs also experience parental separation, and often illicit substance use, mental illness, and domestic violence, all of which are adverse childhood experiences associated with morbidity and premature mortality.

Neo-natal health science tells us that positive social interactions in a child's early years are considered critical to the development of healthy social relationships and personality growth.

Studies indicate that, upon entering early childhood educational programs, children born to incarcerated women are at higher risk of behavioral health problems than their peers.

It should not surprise anyone familiar with the juvenile criminal justice system that children of incarcerated women are more likely to be caught up in the criminal justice system themselves, deflating the upward trajectory of their life's potential.

The writing is on the wall: there is a positive, statistically significant correlation between the total incarceration rate and the infant mortality.

Studies reveal that newborn babies separated from their mothers, due to confinement, suffer health and psychological complications such as weakened attachment, bonding and abandonment at exponentially compounded rates.

Ten states currently operate successful similar programs and studies have shown that 71 percent of the babies served attained attachment goals with their inmate-mothers while in a prison nursery setting, a percentage greater than that reported by most low-risk, community children whose mothers had no criminal history or involvement.

Nursery participants also had a lower recidivism rate compared to non-participating mothers.

In spite of the fact that the mothers of most of these children had not internalized secure attachment in their own childhoods, 71 percent of the babies achieved secure attachment with their own mothers while in the prison nursery setting.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the national infant mor-

tality rate is 5.96 deaths per 1,000 births, increasing to 7.9 infant deaths per 1,000 live births for Hispanic inmates, and 14.3 infant deaths per 1,000 live births among African American inmates.

Other studies have documented that parental incarceration elevates the risk of early infant death by 29.6 percent for the average infant, concentrating effects during the post-neonatal period.

The data demonstrates that incarceration compounds women's depression and the risk of contracting infectious or chronic stress-related illnesses, which may harm infant health through numerous mechanisms also increasing infant mortality rates.

The “SIMARRA Act” will decrease unprecedentedly high current infant mortality rates and allow inmate mothers to provide healthy and safe gestation to protect their unborn, as well as bond with infants during their first 30 months of life, designated by the CDC as one of the most critical stages of development.

Further, H.R. 5130 simultaneously implements risk and needs assessments, risk reduction incentives, and risk and recidivism reduction programs to address the healthcare, safety and rehabilitative needs of new-mother-inmates as they serve their sentence.

Mass incarceration not only fosters inequality but also diminishes a child's chances of surviving its first year of life, which combined together can further hinder a child's life chances.

The most likely long-term mechanism through which imprisonment affects infant mortality is through its effects on maternal health.

Mr. Speaker, as a nation we do not have a person to waste, so we must embrace practices that nurture the bonds between mother and child.

The “SIMARRA Act” will provide resources and programming to ensure a healthy and safe environment for these children during their critical stages of development.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in sponsoring and supporting H.R. 5130, the “Stop Infant Mortality and Recidivism Reduction Act of 2016” or the “SIMARRA Act.”